

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-01 ISO-00 PA-01 /004 W
----- 043538

P R 021617Z JAN 75
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO USINFO WASHDC PRIORITY
SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2128
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

UNCLAS BEIRUT 0063

USIA FOR IOP/M, IBS, IPS, INA

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, PFOR, XF, EG, UR, LE

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: POSTPONEMENT OF BREZHNEV TRIP

1. SUMMARY. DECEMBER 31 AND JANUARY 1 BEIRUT PAPERS
ENGAGE IN INTENSIVE SPECULATION ON REASONS FOR
POSTPONEMENT OF BREZHNEV'S VISIT TO MIDEAST. EDITORIAL
COMMENT INCLUDES WIDELY DIVERGENT ANALYSES OF POSTPONEMENT'S
PROBABL RELATION TO OR IMPACT ON FURTHER PEACE EFFORTS.
END SUMMARY.

2. LEADING PRO-EGYPTIAN AL-ANWAR, QUOTING "DIPLOMATIC
SOURCES" IN CAIRO, HIGHLIGHTS REPORTED SOVIET BELIEF THAT
CURRENT STAGE OF MIDEAST CRISIS IS NOT CONDUSIVE TO
BREZHNEV VISIT, SINCE CLEAR AND POSITIVE RESULTS IN
POLITICAL AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE FIELD WOULD NOT BE
FORTHCOMING, AND SOVIETS WOULD THUS NOT BE ABLE TO
CONSECRATE SUCCESS OF VISIT WITH DELIVERIES OF ADVANCED
ARMS TO EGYPT. SOVIETS WISH EGYPTIANS TO STOP LOOKING TO
AMERICAN DIPLOMACY FOR POLITICAL SOLUTION AND ALSO FIND
THEMSELVES UNABLE TO DELIVER ADVANCED ARMS WITHOUT ACCOMPANYING
EXPERTS. MEANWHILE, "ARAB DIPLOMATIC SOURCES" IN CAIRO
BELIEVE SOVIETS ARE ESPECIALLY CONSCIOUS OF POSSIBLE U.S.
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REACTION TO DELIVERY OF ADVANCED ARMS TO EGYPT AND EXPECT

THAT U.S. WOULD MOVE IN SUCH AN EVENT TO INCREASE SUPPLIES TO ISRAEL, WITH RESULT THAT SITUATION WOULD BECOME MORE EXPLOSIVE THAN EVER. FOR THIS REASON, SOVIETS PREFER TO RECONVENE GENEVA (WITH PLO PARTICIPATION) AS WAY OF AVOIDING EXPLOSION. IF U.S. FAILS TO WIN ISRAELI ACCEPTANCE OF PLO PRESENCE AT GENEVA, WAR WOULD BECOME INEVITABLE, AND THERE WOULD THEN BE AMPLE JUSTIFICATION FOR GIVING ARABS ALL WEAPONS THEY NEED. IN ANY CASE, "EAST EUROPEAN DIPLOMATIC SOURCES" IN CAIRO DOES NOT DISCOUNT POSSIBILITY THAT POSTPONEMENT MAY HAVE BEEN PLANNED IN ADVANCE TO GIVE SECRETARY KISSINGER ANOTHER CHANCE TO CONTINUE HIS STEP-BY-STEP EFFORTS.

3. PRO-LIBYAN AS-SAFIR, QUOTING "OFFICIAL SOURCES" IN BEIRUT, HIGHLIGHTS FOUR REASONS FOR POSTPONEMENT: (A) DISPUTE OVER WAY TO SOLVE MIDEAST CRISIS; (B) DISPUTE OVER ARMS AND EXPERTS; (C) DISPUTE OVER ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, BANKING AND FOOD POLICIES, AND HIGH DAM ISSUE; (D) CONFUSION OVER VISIT, ITS DATES, CONFLICTING VISITS, ETC.

4. OTHER PAPERS RELY ON WIRE SERVICE ANALYSES, ALTHOUGH PRO-SYRIAN ASH-SHARQ, QUOTING "DIPLOMATIC SOURCES" IN BEIRUT HIGHLIGHTS SOVIET INTELLIGENCE REPORTS THAT NEW ISRAELI ATTACK IS BEING PLANNED FOR MID-JANUARY IN COORDINATION WITH U.S. AS REASONS FOR POSTPONEMENT.

5. EDITORIAL, LEADING INDEPENDENT AN-NAHAR'S EDITOR-IN-CHIEF MICHEL ABU JAWDEH ATTRIBUTES POSTPONEMENT TO SADAT'S POSITION (DECEMBER 31): "EXPULSION OF SOVIET EXPERTS WAS CONDITION FOR ANY AMERICAN MOVE BEFORE OCTOBER WAR AND AFTER. NOW, BLOCKING WAY TO RETURN OF EXPERTS IS CONDITION FOR ANY NEW AMERICAN MOVE. THIS MOST PROBABLY IS LOGIC WHICH PRESIDENTSADAT IS APPLYING TO COMPLICATED SITUATION. IF NEW AMERICAN MOVE TAKES PLACE, EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT WILL HAVE SUCCEEDED... IF NO AMERICAN MOVE OCCURS, PRESIDENT SADAT'S POLICY WILL FACE ITS GREATEST DIFFICULTIES...SADAT, INSTEAD OF BEING WINDOW THROUGH WHICH SOVIETS DIRECT POLITICAL BLOW TO SAUDI ARABIA AND AMERICA, HAS BECOME DOOR FROM WHICH SOVIETS HAVE BEEN TURNED AWAY AMIDST EVIDENT SAUDI AND AMERICAN SATISFACTION."

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6. AN-NAHAR'S COLUMNIST 'ABD AL-KARIM ABU AN-NASR ATTRIBUTES POSTPONEMENT TO SOVIET UNWILLINGNESS TO BE USED (JANUARY 1): "POSTPONEMENT OF BREZHNEV'S TRIP SHOWS THAT POLICY OF THREATENING RUSSIA TO ACHIEVE RAPPROCHEMENT WITH AMERICA AND OBTAIN ADDITIONAL GAINS FROM IT IS NO LONGER AS EASY TO IMPLEMENT AS IT WAS IN PAST.... SOME MAY SAY THAT POSTPONEMENT OF VISIT IS GAIN IN ITSELF AND THAT THIS WILL BRING AMERICA TO PLEASE EGYPT IN FIRST INSTANCE BY PUTTING

NEW PRESSURE ON ISRAEL. BUT FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS MAY INDICATE CONTRARY. PRESIDENT SADAT HAD, DURING LAST FEW MONTHS, FELT BITTER OVER AMERICAN POSITION AND HAD SET HIS HOPES ON BREZHNEV'S VISIT TO STRENGTHEN HIS POLITICAL AND MILITARY FRONT AGAINST ISRAEL. POSTPONEMENT OF VISIT HAS COME, GREATLY WEAKENING POSSIBILITY OF STRENGTHENING EGYPTIAN POLITICAL AND MILITARY FRONT BY SOVIETS. FOR THIS REASON, CONTRARY TO ALL ANALYSES AND DEDUCTIONS, SOME REPEAT THESIS THAT POSTPONEMENT OF VISIT WILL NOT MAKE NEW ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SINAI EASIER, BUT WILL MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT."

7. CONSERVATIVE PRO-SAUDI AL-HAYAT APPROVES OF POSTPONEMENT, SEEING GRAND DESIGN BEHIND CURRENT SOVIET MOVES (DECEMBER 31): "SOVIET PLANS... CONCENTRATE HEAVILY ON... BRINGING MIDEAST AREA BACK TO 'NO-WAR NO-PEACE' SITUATION... AND EXPLOITING THIS SITUATION AND NEED OF SOME STATES FOR ARMS TO IMPOSE CERTAIN STRINGS ON THEM AND MAKE THEM ENTER POLITICS OF SUPERPOWER POLARIZATION."

8. LEADING LEFTIST PRO-PLO AL-MUHARRIR CRITICIZES IMPLICATIONS OF POSTPONEMENT (JANUARY 1): "WAY IS SHUT BEFORE HONORABLE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT.... OBVIOUSLY, WE MUST THINK OF WAR AND PREPARE FOR IT WITH SAME INTENSITY WITH WHICH WE THINK OF PEACE AND PREPARE FOR IT.... MOSCOW IS ... SOLE ARMS SOURCE ABLE TO REPLY TO AMERICAN ARMS SOURCES OPEN TO ISRAEL.... MOSCOW IS ONLY ONE ABLE TO FORCE WASHINGTON TO REVIEW ANY EQUATION IT TRIES TO IMPOSE ON US HERE IN MIDEAST.... WHAT IF AMERICANS.... TRIED FOR ANOTHER PARTIAL SETTLEMENT ON SINAI FRONT TO COMPENSATE EGYPT FOR POSTPONEMENT OF SOVIET LEADER'S VISIT? SUCH A 'GIFT' WOULD BE MORE DANGEROUS THAN DOING NOTHING, BECAUSE IT WOULD MOVE SETTLEMENT FURTHER AND FURTHER IN PATH OF BILATERAL AGREEMENTS AND ISOLATION OF ARAB FRONTS FROM EACH OTHER."

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9. PRO-SOVIET AND OFTEN PRO-EGYPTIAN ASH-SHA'B, HOWEVER, LOOKS AT POSTPONEMENT POSITIVELY (DECEMBER 31): "AMERICANS THEMSELVES MAY CLAIM THAT SOVIET LEADER'S VISIT TO ARAB CAPITALS, ESPECIALLY CAIRO, IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, WOULD COMPLICATE EFFORTS OF THEIR SECRETARY OF STATE, MR. KISSINGER.... LET US GIVE THIS MAGICIAN ANOTHER CHANCE. PERHAPS HIS MAGIC WILL BE OF SOME USE. OTHERWISE, HE WILL HAVE TO CONFESS HIS FAILURE.... SOVIET-ARAB REUNION CAN WAIT A WHILE LONGER IF THIS IS IN INTERESTS OF PEACE...."

GODLEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, VISITS, PARTY LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BEIRUT00063
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750002-0768
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750183/aaaacuxu.tel
Line Count: 166
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JAN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 JAN 2003 by daviscw>; APPROVED <11 FEB 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEDIA REACTION: POSTPONEMENT OF BREZHNEV TRIP
TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, EG, LE, UR, XF, (BREZHNEV, LEONID I)
To: USIA STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006